

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 EURE-00 NSCE-00 PA-03 PRS-01

USIE-00 SS-15 NSC-10 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 MBFR-03 SAJ-01 RSR-01 OMB-01

INRE-00 /092 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0415

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO CNO PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

USDEL MC BRUSSELS PRIORITY

USNMR SHAPE PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

CINCUSNAVEUR PRIORITY

USDOCOSOUTH PRIORITY

COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 8701

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, NATO, IT

SUBJECT: REDUCTION OF US NAVAL FORCES IN MEDITERRANEAN

REF: A. USNATO 3906; B. ROME 8157; C. ROME 8507

1. IN RESPONSE TO THE US OFFER TO PROVIDE A NAVY TO NAVY BRIEFING ON THE US PLAN TO WITHDRAW THREE DE'S FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN, THE FONOFF HAS NOW INFORMED US THAT THE ITALIAN NAVY WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE SUCH A SESSION. THEIR PREFERENCE IS THAT THE USN EXPERTS COME TO ROME FOR INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE US PROGRAM. MEANWHILE, THE ITALIAN REP ON THE DPC AND THE MILITARY COMMITTEE HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED NOT RPT NOT TO RAISE THE SUBJECT IN BRUSSELS.

2. FROM VARIOUS RECENT CONVERSATIONS WE HAVE HAD WITH KNOWLEDGE-
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ABLE ITALIAN OFFICIALS, WE GATHER THAT THE STRONG ITALIAN NAVY

REACTION TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE DE'S IS PREDICATED NOT SO MUCH ON THE MILITARY IMPORTANCE OF THE THREE SHIPS, BUT RATHER ON WHETHER THEY REPRESENT JUST THE BEGINNING, AND THAT ADDITIONAL WITHDRAWALS WILL BE MADE IN THE FUTURE. THEY ARE ESPECIALLY NERVOUS ABOUT RUMORS THEY HAVE HEARD THAT ONE OF THE CARRIERS MIGHT BE WITHDRAWN. AND, WE BELIEVE, THIS NERVOUSNESS IS NOT CONFINED SOLELY TO THE ITALIAN NAVY. GIVEN THE PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE THE ITALIANS ATTACH TO A STRONG US NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE MED, WHICH THEY REGARD AS THE SINE QUA NON OF ITALY'S SECURITY, ANY FURTHER SIGNIFICANT US DRAWDOWNS WOULD QUICKLY ENGENDER A SEVERE POLITICAL REACTION. HENCE, THE USN EXPERTS SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ADDRESS ANY FUTURE PLANS FOR THE SIXTH FLEET DURING THE SESSION IN ROME.

3. PLEASE ADVISE AS TO WASHINGTON'S THINKING AS TO TIMING AND OTHER PARTICULARS OF ROME MEETING. VOLPE

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